mistress would be willing to satiate my animal urges.

The irony is that women friends tell me horror stories of endless hornyness and husbands flacidly snoring away the night. I yearn to help them, ease the edge off their 'blue clit' ache.

But my wife says that god is punishing us both -- she to be forever tormented by a horn-dog man to appease her Irish Catholic guilt and me forever cursed by a woman whose libido is lost in a time twat and whose lament can be heard in Garboesqueness late at night, "I vont to be alone."

She's only partially right. Another part of the Victorian woman loves to be endlessly pursued and caught and taken under protest. But we're both too Victorian to admit it.

THE ALL-PURPOSE STOMACH

Putting food into it is the least of its talents. It's a comfort to the wife and kids. A babysitter. A lover. The kids climb on its imposing mountainousness (while Dad sleeps on the couch) in one wild fling before bedtime. The wife has so much more than love handles. It's a steel-belted radial 500 that runs her over with love. And food. Dad tries but the stomach has its own garden now right in the backyard ... zucchini, beans, carrots, pumpkins, and fresh strawberries, blueberries, etc., all growing within the length of a colon ... Dad resists, but home-baked breads, cakes, pies, season after season, a stomach for all seasons. Dad says, "It's genetic -- my stomach runs in the family," or "I'm doing more exercises now so I'll firm it up soon." But then hot, fat blueberry muffins and
strawberry-rhubarb pie with whipped cream and a big batch of oatmeal-raisin cookies or tollhouse chocolate chip ... and the stomach does firm up, round and full and content and securely protruding from the family album.

-- Leo Mailman
Cape Elizabeth ME

PEPPERS:
ON A NEWSPAPER REVIEW OF A ROBERT ALTMAN FILM: "THREE WOMEN"
MORELIA MARKET, MEXICO

Peppers green, peppers red, peppers blue
peppers peppers peppers everywhere
hide me, I scream, I can't get away from peppers
jalapeno peppers, little deadly peppers, ground peppers
peppers black, peppers that make you sneeze
the pepper that ate Tokyo
peppers that make you swallow your teeth
peppers bell, superpepper, the pepper from outer space
peppers as harmless as mushrooms
behind every great man is a good pepper
peppers that will make your car battery sing with volts
peppers that will strip the chrome off your bumpers
peppers that will melt the fillings in your teeth
peppers in my chorizo, peppers in my eggs
cream and sugar in your coffee, señor, or peppers
chili peppers and doctor peppers
peppers in my curried chicken
peppers on peppers
the day of the peppers, pepper uppers, pepper trees
peppers eating out a whole new stomach
peppers between my teeth
a girl named Pepper
peppers that sank a thousand ships
I admit that the flies don't like them
and they keep the meat from rotting
and they don't stink like onions and garlic
but they are in the restaurants on the table, pickled and smiling
like there is nothing to worry about
I order something safe
and some sadist in the back of the kitchen
is salting my waffles with peppers
they come floating with bananas in my cornflakes
they sit like gate-crashers on the edge of my plate